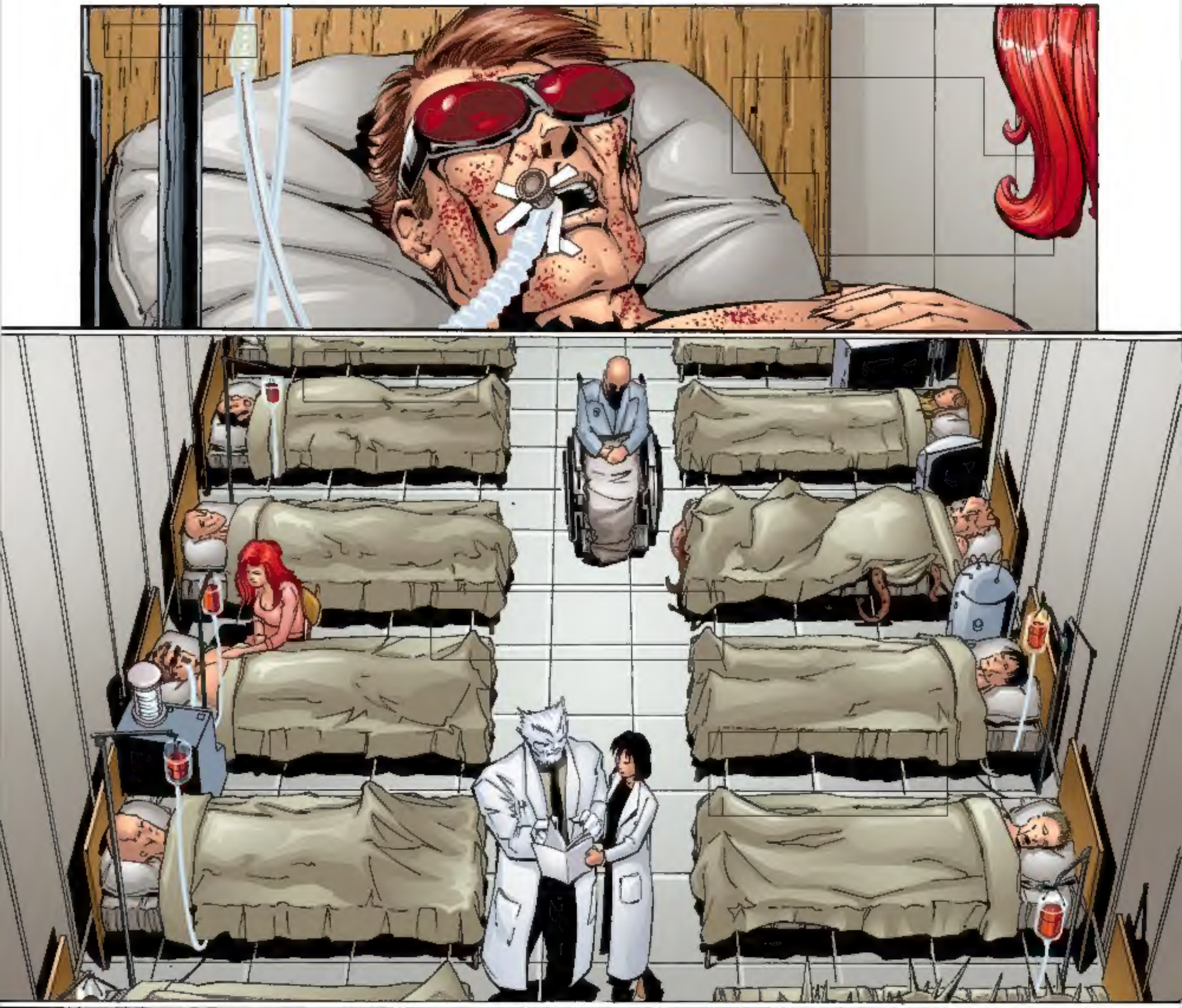
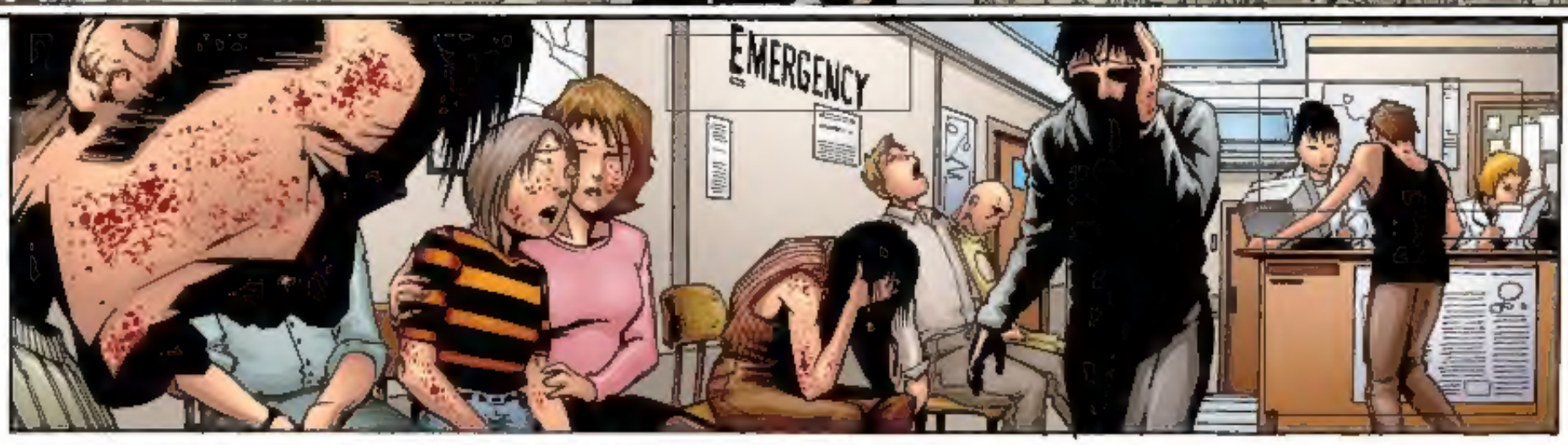
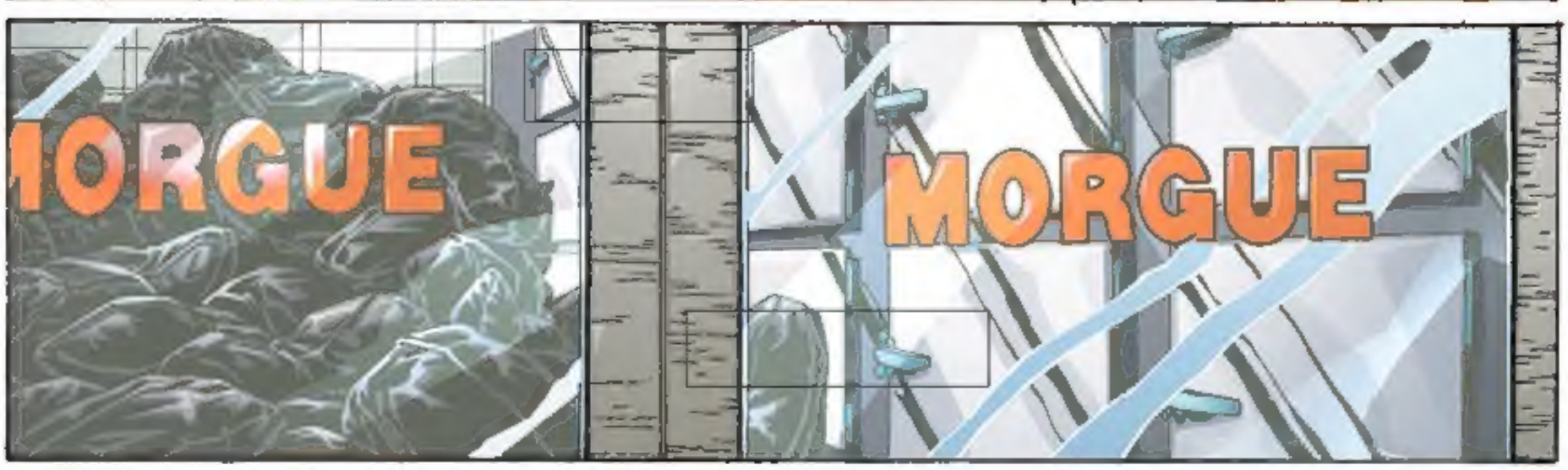
MARVEL
PG 20

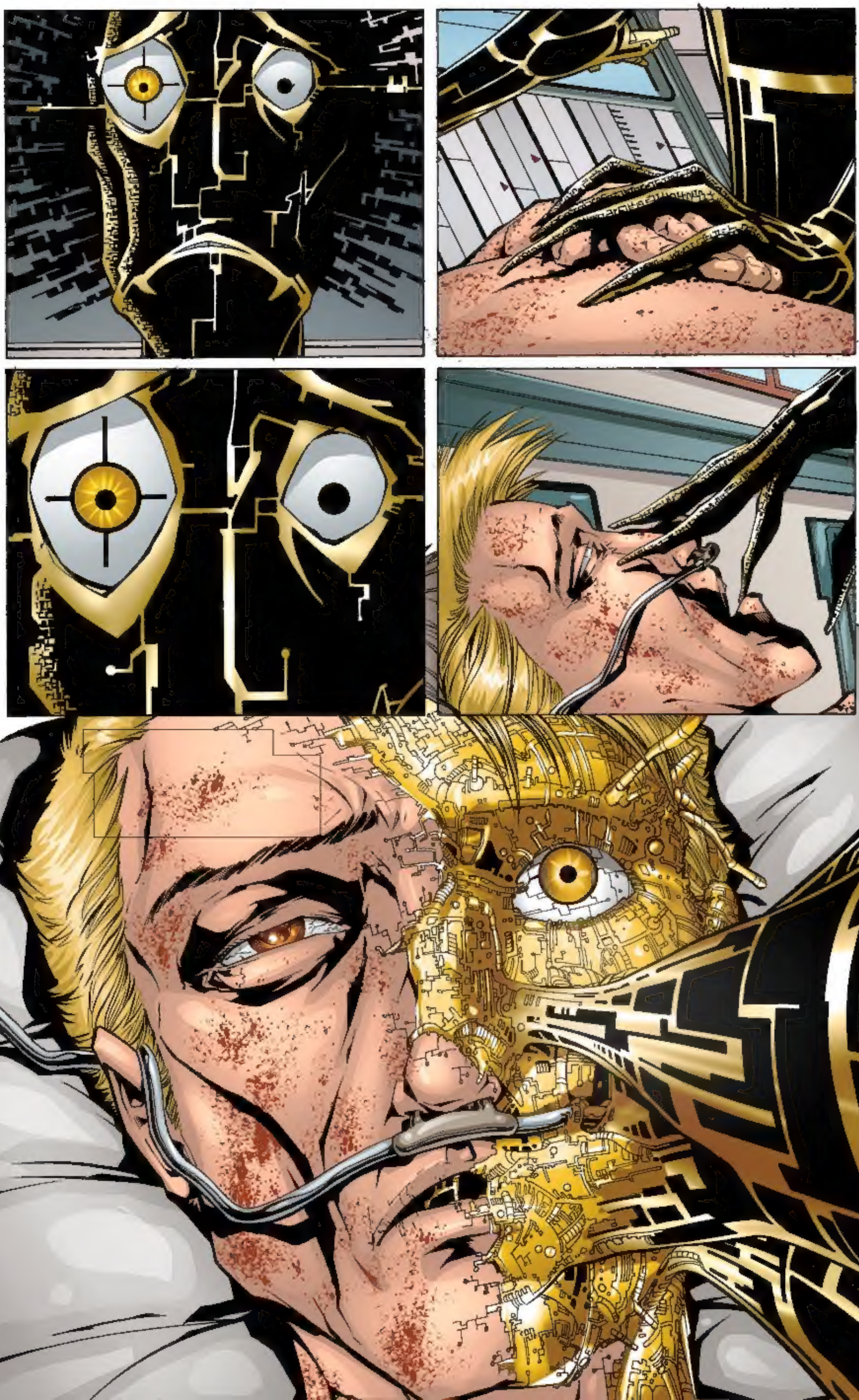
EXILES

ILLYANA RASPUTIN
DAUGHTER, SISTER, FRIEND, HERO
1983-1995




EMERGENCY


MORGUE
MORGUE



Then there was a young man named Doug Ramsey, code-named Cypher.

Cypher had the unique mutant ability of being able to decipher and communicate in any language-- human, alien, or otherwise.

This included the language of computers. To him, all computers were practically sentient.

And the one computer that actually was sentient was his best friend. An alien creature named Warlock.

Warlock came from a violent race of cybernetically empowered humanoids. As a culture, they were brutal, unforgiving, and prone to war.

They fought amongst themselves as well as with other races.

But Warlock was different. He was a pacifist-- the mutant of his race. He fled his world for Earth. Cypher became his best friend and teacher.

Then, however... Cypher contracted the Legacy Virus.

He was dying.

Warlock hoped his own unique physiology would help expunge the virus from Cypher's system.

Warlock loved Cypher. All he wanted was to save him.

It was a mistake this world would never recover from.

Once the Legacy Virus joined with Warlock's bio-circuitry-- it **mutated**.

It evolved.

It became an entirely **new** disease...

...a disease that didn't limit itself to mutants. All forms of life were susceptible.

This new disease was no longer fatal...

...but it was **infinitely** more contagious.

Like a vampire, its hunger for additional life **energy** forced it to seek out more victims.

Cypher and Warlock's strain of the Virus turned some of its victims into zombie-like constructs-- confused aberrations that were neither man nor machine...

...the rest became something entirely different.

But to call them monsters would **minimize** them. They were some of the **strongest** beings on the planet and had maintained all of their intellect.

But the Virus made them into something else. They became-- **evil**.

They grew into a new race, One intent on becoming the **dominant** species on the planet.

They are the **Vi-Locks**. And they control the Earth.

We're gonna get in *so* much trouble.

Stop being such a *wuss*. Do you want to catch lizards or not?

We can catch lizards in the city.

Not *big* ones, buttface, just the little baby ones.

We have to get *outside* the city if we're gonna get anything *decent*.

This is stupid. We're outside the *perimeter*. Vi-Locks could get us.

No, they won't. The *Disrupters* will keep them away.

The Disrupters *only* work as far as the perimeter.

My *dad* says that they are just being *overly* careful. He says, the Disrupters work *a lot* further than the outer fence.

They just want to keep people scared. That way they do what they're told.

I don't like this. I'm going back.

David! Man, you're *such* a tool. I'm just gonna set the traps and we can go.

Nothing's out here. We're--

Are you-- missing-- SWQUARK-- absent--lacking-- lost?!

SQEEEEEE-- small-- human-meat-- mammal?

AAAAH!!

AAAAAH!!!

AAAAH!!

FLAAACCCHH!

AAAIIEE!!

FLAAACCCHH!

Departed-- left-- strayed-- SQUAAAARK-- from home-- mammal?

Do you-- deprived-- deficiency-- *lack*-- a survival instinct?!

NOOOO!!!

Must inquire-- objective? *SQUEEE* What-- do-- what do-- with captures?

Return-- force-- *bring* subjects-- back to *Network?*

Pollute-- Contaminate-- *infect* them-- send back-- into human-mammal-meat city?

Affirmative. *Decapitate-- HAAWRK--* abandon-- drop-- *leave--* carcass-- bodies-- inside perimeter of meat city.

Negative-- No-No. Infected subject-- detained-- abrupt-- *stopped* at Disrupter line. One wonders-- inquires-- *speculates--* perhaps-- *infuse* small mammals-- on *cellular* level.

Have *you* a guess-- theory-- hypothesis-- *SQUEEEE--* opinion?

SQEEEE-- Works for me.

TZOT!

Sorry, Blink, I couldn't wait. *Please* tell me that thing was a bad guy.

As near as I can figure, Mimic.

Good. So we can make with the e#%-whupping on these would-be child-murdering, cyborg, zombie freaks.

Have at it, Morph.

Okay, gang, *that's* more than a *little* creepy!

I got him! Get the other children!

NOW!

Stay on the offensive!

KWEEESH!

Identify-- selves!! Who are you, mammals?! Where did you-- source-- home-- come from?!

Let's see how talkative you are when you're smashed into the ground a few times!

Not such a big chatterbox now, huh?

Places where people without heads don't ask so many questions.

BLAM!

C'mon! Give up the kid! You'll have to put something else in this disgusting little *papoose* of yours.

YUCK. This is *really* attached to your back. Too gross.

Outpowered-- *disadvantage!!!* SQEEEE-- F-f-further engagement-- *ineffective!*

Dieperse!

Information base-- data-- has been accumulated for *network*. Must-- should-- have to-- report to exchange-- *immediately!*

Inquiry-- W-W-We flee?

We are lost-- *beaten*-- before it has begun. O-o-only-- logical action.

Mimic SunFire-- get in the air and get a fix on them before they can get rein--

Oh crap.

We got serious prob ems, gang! Time to bail ou--

CHOCK!!

Blink's knocked out! We can't teleport!

GO! Now!!

Head toward the city! From what I gathered, these things won't be able to get inside Las Vegas. Those *monsters* mentioned something about Disrupters--

--let's hope whatever those are, they keep them at a distance!

Either that or they just don't like gambling. Or white tiger magic acts. Or *Cirque de Soleil*

And I gotta ask-- *who* doesn't like *Cirque de Soleil*?

Are you Avengers?

Something like that. We're here to help

Man, this is really it. This is *Las Vegas!*

Wow. If this is the *Big Easy*, this reality is going to be a *huge* disappointment

New Orleans is the Big Easy, stupid.

Oh yeah? Then what's Vegas called?

I've got them in sight. They're about fifty feet from "go".

Anyone wondering where all the *people* are?

Any word from the *Tallus* yet, Blink?

It sure is taking its time giving us our purpose here

Nothing yet, Sasquatch. But I think we're going to get something *soon*. I've been getting better at sensing when a message is coming at us.

FWIP FWIP

Whu--

HEY!!

I've got two of them. Give me a half-second!

Got the other two! I'm heading for Decontamination Lab 3!

GO!!

Stinger activated. It's on Level Four. That should take them out without killing them.

Door Seven is open-- containment proceeding

Geez-- are you all getting a good look at them? These aren't civilians!

Do you suppose the Locks made them? Do you think the Head-Locks figured out a way to beat our Disrupters?

Calm down, I can't hear myself think. I need the line of communication to stay open. Just chill.

They're in-- closing doors

Bioscan activated....

Looks good

Tell me when it's perfect.

Clean. They are completely clean

Thank God... unlock Bay Door Three on the south side, please.

You're

I am *very*, very sorry for *all* of this, folks. We can't be too careful these days. Especially with strangers. *Most* especially with *super-powered* strangers.

We always have to be certain that everyone is one hundred percent *human*. Which, *thankfully*, you all are.

I'm Doctor Henry Pym. This is Spider-Woman.

Welcome to the Avengers Compound.

We're the Exiles, and--

--hey guys, the Talus is talking...

Sure... now Tell that piece of junk jewelry to try and get here during the first inning

As near as we can figure, seventy percent of the population is infected... full Vi-locks.

We can't say for sure, since communication is difficult, but they're tapped into radio waves, phones, modem, satellites...

We mostly transmit through our telepaths outside Vegas. They're limited over long distances, but they get the job done when we're in the field.

We were able to establish this *enclave* here in Vegas a few years ago while the Vi-Locks were just establishing their footholds around the globe.

The Avengers have a large number of super-powered mutants and advanced humans, so we've been able to keep this place relatively secure

But, honestly, it's only because the *higher-ups* let us. The Vi-Lock leaders... They're the *advanced* Vi-locks. They mostly call themselves *Primes*. Some of the younger folks call them *Head-locks*.

Anyway, I know in my heart that if they wanted to attack... the strength they have... The *Network* would devour us all

That's what they, more or less, call their race... the Network.

Anyway... we don't stand a chance...

.. it's funny how humanity was *so* frightened that mutants would eventually become the most *powerful* race on this planet. I guess they were right.

It just got a little more *H.P. Lovecraft* than they probably imagined.

What if you had the *source*? The *original* strain of the virus.

Our *primary* focus had been survival. That coupled with a search for a vaccine. I've utilized just about every *known* mutant healing factor available.

The antidote I've got in these tubes seems to be the most effective, but only in the short term. It staves off the *full* conversion, but doesn't *cure*.

You mean Cypher?

Yes. Sure.

I'm fairly certain I could create a *very effective* vaccine from the original joining of Doug Ramsey and Warlock...

But, no offense... that's a *pipe dream*. He was probably killed years ago, during the *Prime War*.

No. He's alive.

And that's why we're here.

What? He's *alive?* How do you know?! Where is he?

The Tatius says he's in some place called *Mainframe*.

Damn it all to hell...

Yeah. That's bad.

It's the Prime's *head-quarters*.

But between you Avengers and us Exiles we have a *shot*, right?

That's *bad*?

Yeah, Sunfire's got a point... just how *many* of us super dudes have gone over to the *dark side*?

Oh, well...

"...mostly everyone."